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\* The "Plea for the Middle Classes" was the document which led to the foundation of the large groups of "Woodard Schools" which now (1884) include 3 in Sussex (Lancing, Hove & Brighton) 1 in Staffs. (Derby) 1 in Shropsh. (Ellesmere, dependent on Derby) 1 in Somerset. (Taunton) & 1 I think in Yorkshire. J.G.T.

> ~~is~~ a Plea for the Middle Classes by Rev. W. Woodard.

# THREE SERMONS

PREACHED AT

THE SPECIAL EVENING SERVICES,

AT

St. Margaret's, Westminster,

BY

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INCUMBENT OF CHRIST CHURCH, HOXTON;

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## P R E F A C E.

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A FEW words may be necessary to explain the reason why these Three Sermons, which were not written with any intention whatever of being printed, are now laid before the public.

At the beginning of this year the Dean and Chapter of Westminster resolved to open the nave of the Abbey for a series of sermons specially intended for the benefit of working people. It was believed that this would afford an opportunity of attending the service of the Church to many who might not have accommodation in their own Parish Churches, and it was hoped that an evening service in Westminster Abbey might be an inducement to some to come to public worship who had hitherto been altogether neglectful of doing so.

This resolution of the Dean and Chapter was attended with great success. Vast numbers of persons resorted to the Abbey; many more, indeed, than could be received within its walls.

In order, therefore, to accommodate such as could not obtain admittance into the Abbey, I resolved to open the galleries of St. Margaret's Church which were not needed for our ordinary congregation at the evening service, which for more than eight years has been performed in St. Margaret's Church, for the working people of my own parish; and at this service all the pews have been free, and open to the first comers.

The number of persons, who, having failed of obtaining admission into the Abbey, sought for accommodation in St. Margaret's, was very large. Upon several occasions there was not even standing room. It seemed to me to be very desirable to encourage as far as I could this attendance at Church; I therefore resolved to request the assistance of other clergymen at this service, for two reasons; one, that the congregation might have the advantage of the teaching and exhortation of more effective preachers; the other, to afford an opportunity to other clergymen of taking a part in a work which I was sure they must be as anxious to promote as myself. I felt that it was, indeed, a work in which all sincere and earnest ministers of the Church of England, whatever different views they might have upon other matters, would not fail to take a deep and common interest, and therefore would be ready and glad to unite in promoting it. I considered it to be an object



that rose far above all the minor considerations of party ; it was common ground of charity, on which all Christians, and, still more, all members of our own Church, could and ought to meet. Nor was I mistaken ; so it has proved. I was, indeed, fully aware that upon some points of less essential moment there is a difference of opinion, even among those able and distinguished clergymen who have so kindly in succession occupied the pulpit in St. Margaret's Church. But this is no affair of mine ; I am not the judge or censor of their opinions upon any such questions. They are all my brother ministers of the Church of England, and I delight to look to those grand and leading features of Christian truth and love in which we can all agree. Having these sentiments myself, I hesitated not to ask the assistance of those who have kindly granted me their help. I have been highly gratified personally by their goodness in so readily complying with my request, and I have inwardly rejoiced with much thankfulness to find such living proofs of active Christian love.

Among those to whom I have to express my acknowledgments for their kind and willing aid are the Rev. W. Scott, and the Rev. F. Maurice, two men of profound scholarship, of very distinguished literary reputation, of the highest moral and religious character, and what was also of great use for my purpose, able and

effective preachers. I have been greatly pained to find that their kindness has exposed them to a most unkind attack. The announcement that they had acceded to my request to preach at St. Margaret's called forth in the columns of a certain religionist newspaper some very unjust and uncharitable remarks towards them, which I deeply regret; as well as observations respecting myself and my own endeavours, which I do not at all regard. The only answer that I have thought it worth while to give is to print the sermons of Mr. Scott and Mr. Maurice. And I gladly avail myself of their kind permission to do so, in order that they may thus become more extensively useful, by being made available to others as well as to those who heard them. I have added my own sermon, preached at the commencement of these services, from which it may be judged what truth there is in the allegations respecting myself made by the editor of the above-mentioned religionist newspaper.

WILLIAM CURETON.

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[*Preached by the* REV. W. CURETON, *Jan. 31, 1858.*]

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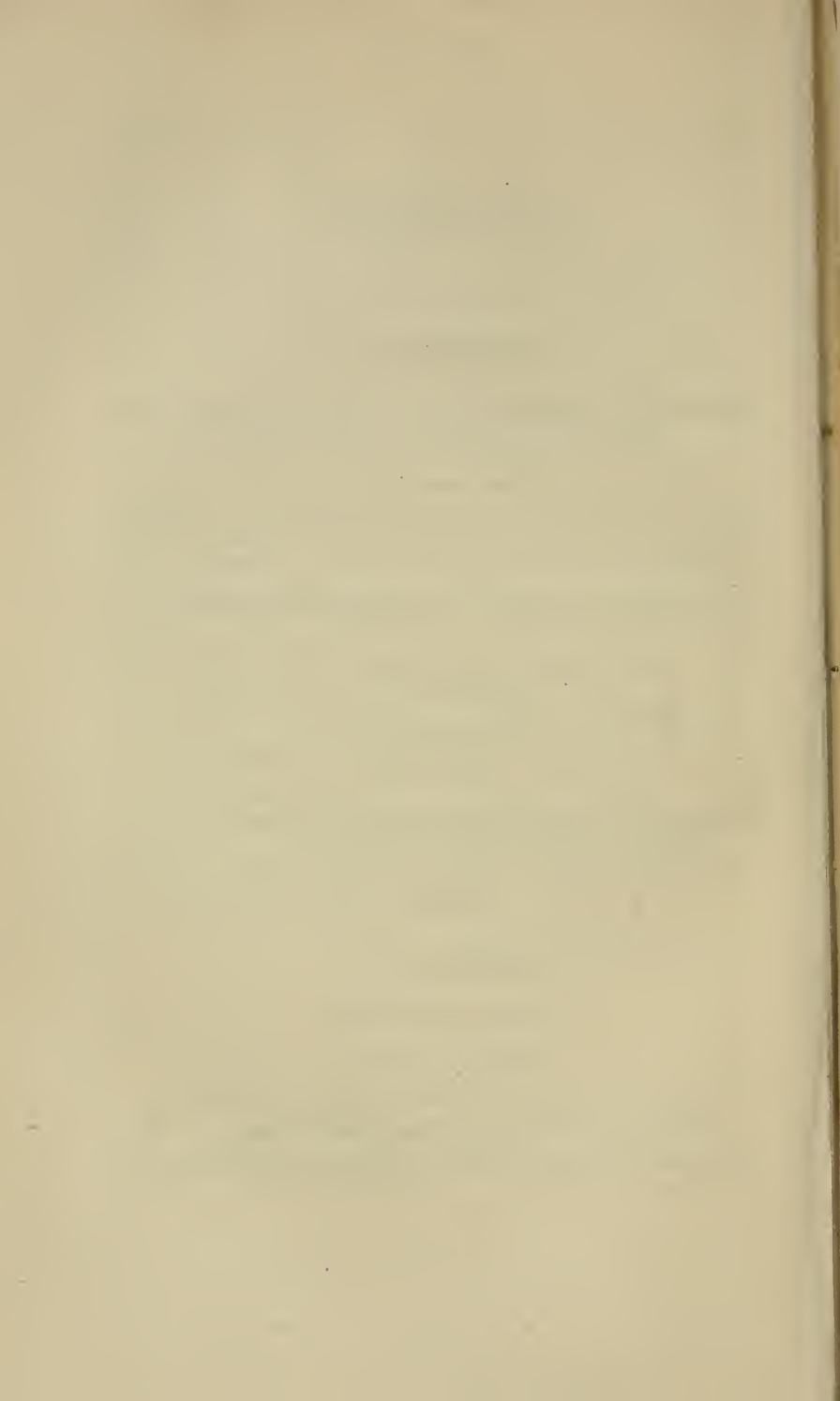
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## SERMON I.

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EVERLASTING LIFE GOD'S FREE GIFT, AND YET  
THE REWARD OF OUR OWN GOOD WORKS.

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ROMANS vi. 23.

“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

THE great end and object of our blessed Lord and Saviour's taking our nature upon Him, and being “made in the likeness of men,” was to seek and to save that which was lost. He came to offer His life a ransom for many, and thus to redeem us from the curse entailed upon sin; to purchase for Himself, by the price of His own blood, a peculiar people, zealous of good works. Having sealed the covenant of our salvation by that His precious blood-shedding, He came to bestow upon us the *gift* of God, which is everlasting life. But this, although a *free gift* of God's most gracious bounty, and a mighty, invaluable gift of such vast price and so tran-

scendent a nature, that we can now only figure to ourselves a very faint and imperfect conception of its excellence, its duration, and its enjoyment, is nevertheless a *covenanted* gift, and one which we can only obtain by fulfilling the conditions attached to it. It can only be acquired by our own diligent and laborious exertions; and although it be the free and gracious boon of our merciful God and Saviour, it is still the promised reward of our own good works.

And let not any suppose (as I have sometimes heard persons, ignorant of the Gospel plan of redemption and salvation, vainly attempt to argue) that these two things are incompatible, viz. that everlasting life cannot be at the same time the *free gift* of God and the *reward* of our own good deeds; for, they urge, if it be a *free gift*, it cannot be a *reward* for services; and, on the other hand, if it be the *reward* for services done, it cannot be the *gift* of God. But if the word of God's holy Apostles and of our Lord Jesus Christ Himself be true, these two must be perfectly consistent with each other, and quite compatible. St. Paul writes, "But not as the offence, so is also the *free gift*. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the *gift* by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the *gift*: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the



*free gift* is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the *free gift* came upon all men unto justification<sup>1</sup>." And again, "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Our Lord's own words are, "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I *give unto* them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand<sup>2</sup>." And again, "Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee; as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should *give* eternal life to as many as thou hast given him<sup>3</sup>." It would be easy to adduce other passages from Scripture plainly showing that eternal life, the salvation of our souls, is God's *free gift* of His bounteous grace, of His munificent bestowal, not any thing of itself necessarily within our own reach, which we could have obtained by our natural exer-

<sup>1</sup> Rom. v. 15.<sup>2</sup> John x.<sup>3</sup> John xvii.

tions, which we could have merited by our own human deserts.

Nor are the declarations of Holy Scripture less explicit, that everlasting life, the salvation of our souls, is the *reward* of our own good deeds, the recompense of our own meritorious actions. Our Lord addressed His disciples in these words, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels, and then he shall *reward* every man, according to his works<sup>4</sup>." And again, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: sick, and in prison, and ye visited

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xvi. 26, 27.

me not." "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal<sup>5</sup>." Everlasting life is here set forward as the reward of the righteous for performing those deeds of kindness, and charity, and goodness, which a due sense of the obligations of the Christian religion will ever produce.

In his Sermon on the Mount our Lord speaks more than once of the *reward* which men shall receive in heaven for their deeds done on earth. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your *reward* in heaven." "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no *reward* of your Father which is in heaven:" "but when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall *reward* thee openly." "Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your *reward* shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil." St. Paul writes, "Every man shall receive his own *reward* according to his labour<sup>6</sup>." And again, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all,

<sup>5</sup> Matt. xxv.

<sup>6</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 8.

but one receiveth the prize? so run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible<sup>7</sup>." And in another place, "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the *reward* of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ: but he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons<sup>8</sup>." St. John writes, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a *full reward*<sup>9</sup>." And in the book of Revelation, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still: and behold, I come quickly, and my *reward* is with me to give to every man according as his work shall be<sup>1</sup>." "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a *right* to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city<sup>2</sup>."

Now it is quite plain from these declarations that everlasting life is the *reward* of those who obey and keep God's commandments; that

<sup>7</sup> 1 Cor. ix. 24.

<sup>8</sup> Col. iii. 23.

<sup>9</sup> 2 John 8.

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. xxii. 14.



they, who in obedience to Christ's precepts, have been kind, and merciful, and charitable to their fellow-men, shall be everlastingly rewarded; that those who have done good, and lived faithful, and just, and holy lives,—those who are righteous, shall go into life eternal; that such as serve the Lord Christ shall receive the reward of the inheritance of those who will be called the children of the Highest; that the Lord shall reward every man according to his works; that every man shall receive his own reward according to his labour. Nothing can be plainer and more explicit than these declarations of Holy Scripture; and, on the other hand, nothing can be more precise and distinct than those which state that everlasting life is the gift of God through our Lord Jesus Christ; that they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. And “as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the *free gift* came upon all men unto justification.”

It is evident, therefore, that everlasting life, and the enjoyment of an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled in the heavens that fadeth not away, are set forth to us in the Holy Scriptures, in the words of our blessed Lord Himself and of His Apostles, as the *free gift* of God; and, at the same time, as the

*reward* for our faith, and obedience, and good works. Inasmuch, therefore, as God cannot lie, and so cannot contradict Himself, it is evident that there is no contradiction and no inconsistency in these two propositions, and that it is quite compatible with its being a *free, and gracious, and bountiful gift* of our heavenly Father, that everlasting may also be the *reward* of our own good deeds and faithful lives as disciples of Christ. The reason for any misapprehension on this head having originated in some men's minds, is to be assigned to two causes; one, that they have taken up certain expressions of Scripture, and considered them partially, without weighing and comparing them with other declarations of inspiration; and have thus been led to assign to them a peculiar meaning (which they may indeed bear when taken singly) without reference to the other parts of the great whole to which they belong, and without due regard being had to the particular circumstances under which they were uttered, or to the general bearing of the argument of which they form a part. The other cause is, that some have forgotten, or overlooked, the peculiar position in which man stands with regard to God, his Creator, his Lord, his Master, his Benefactor, his Friend, his Father, his Saviour, and his Judge. They have given to the terms "covenant," "free gift," and "reward," the exact meaning which they bear



when used among *men* with reference to one another, without assigning to them that modification in their meaning which becomes necessary when they are referred to God, and relate also to the creatures of His hand. They forget the difference which there is between men (who, as such, being the sons of one common Father, and of one common nature, are in this respect all equal) treating with one another upon those terms which such equality gives, and between the Creator dealing with His own creatures. He is absolute Lord of all; while they are entirely His slaves, and His possession, because He brought them out of nothing into existence, and has given them all their faculties, and supplied them with every thing which they have. They lose sight of that consideration, as to our position with respect to God, which in all things should weigh deeply in our minds, the spirit of which St. Paul expresses in his argument to the Romans in these words:—  
 “Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour and another unto dishonour<sup>3</sup>?”

Since, therefore, we stand in this relation to our Lord, and Master, and Creator, if He

<sup>3</sup> Rom. ix. 20.

in His mercy, and goodness, and compassion, and love, condescends to propose to us any conditions, to the fulfilment of which He is pleased to attach a *reward*, surely, the fact itself of His propounding to us such conditions, is a gracious, a bountiful, and a *free gift*. We are His creatures and slaves, and bounden absolutely to perform every thing which He commands, without condition or promise on His part. Any condition or promise, therefore, which He may annex to the fulfilment of His commands, is a free and gracious gift; it is what we of ourselves have no right or title to whatever.

Even, then, were God's commands most harsh and rigorous, that which He requires of us most laborious and oppressive, and only some small advantage promised to us at the end, some trifling enjoyment to be obtained when we had done all—still even this would be a free and gracious gift, for when we have done all, we should say, “We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.” Any boon, therefore, which He may bestow upon us at the last, would be a gift, a free, unmerited gift, to which of ourselves, and from our relation to Him, we had, and could have no right or claim whatever.

But when the conditions which He has been pleased to set before us are not harsh and rigorous, but mild and gentle, when His own

words are, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light," when obedience to His precepts ever brings with it present satisfaction and delight, when the enjoyment derived from the keeping of His commandments is so gratifying, and so satisfying as to be in itself a great *reward*, and further, when the ultimate *reward*, which is promised to the faithful observance of them is everlasting life, consisting in such unspeakable and indescribable joys as "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, which God has prepared for those that love him," surely, such conditions as these, such a covenant as this, is not only a free, unmerited gift, but a bounteous, munificent, precious, invaluable gift, which all who know their own true interests, and all who have any sense of gratitude for mercy, and goodness, and love, should be most anxious to accept, and most thankfully receive. Everlasting life, therefore, which is offered to us under these conditions, is the *free*, gracious bounty of God; it is the "*gift* of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ;" although, at the same time, it is the eternal and exceeding great *reward* of our own exertions, of our own faith and good works, of our own diligent labours in fulfilling those conditions, to which alone the promise of everlasting life has been given.

It is quite true; nothing indeed can be more certain and more evident, that in our-

selves we are unprofitable servants, that of ourselves we are poor, weak, sinful creatures, utterly unable to render God any service; and, therefore, that nothing which we could do ourselves can be meritorious in His sight. We, creatures of earth, what power have we of ourselves to render any benefit to the Lord of heaven, and thus to claim a recompense at His hands? "Who" (as the great Apostle St. Paul asks) "hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen<sup>4</sup>." And yet, those who truly love Him, and keep His commandments, shall be everlastingly rewarded for the same. All the great blessings and enjoyments of the kingdom of heaven shall be the *reward* of poor sinful man's own diligence, and labour, and exertions. These, although valueless, and useless, and unprofitable to God, have acquired for us an inestimable price, an inconceivable value and advantage, from the free and gracious promise which God has been pleased to give. But it is this promise alone, that imparts to them their value; and this promise is only made under the conditions of the covenant in Christ Jesus. We are free agents, having liberty to accept or reject that covenant. In the one case, we

<sup>4</sup> Rom. xi. 35.



become entitled, under the seal of God's Word, to all the benefits attached to the fulfilment of the conditions, and liable to all the penalties entailed upon the violation of them; and in the other case we are the children of wrath, born in sin, with no title to receive any recompense at God's hands for any deeds of human virtue which we may perform, and subject to those sad consequences of sin and death, which the transgression of our first parent transmitted to all his natural descendants. But when we have been once admitted into the Christian covenant, if we afterwards labour diligently to fulfil the conditions, and continue faithful to the end, we shall certainly receive at the last everlasting life as the *reward* of our good deeds of faith and charity, which we have done in Christ, and through Christ, and for Christ. Then it is our faithful obedience that will earn for us an exceeding great *reward*; everlasting life is, then, a recompense for services, which, although otherwise unprofitable and without merit, have acquired a merit and a virtue from God's gracious promise annexing it; which, under the bounty of the same gracious promise, shall enable us to work out our own salvation, and to gain for ourselves the joys of heaven. But, indeed, this we should not be able to do, without the constant aid of God's Holy Spirit, helping our infirmities; without continual supplies of grace; without daily gifts of strength from

above, empowering us to fulfil the conditions. So that even under that covenant, in itself a most gracious and bountiful gift, by which we are enabled to work out our salvation, and to gain for ourselves the vast joys of heaven, we still need an abundant and never-failing supply of heavenly gifts; and while our merciful Father has enhanced the value of the reward, rendered it more precious in our eyes, and more enjoyable to us when obtained, by attaching to it the satisfaction which we must feel from knowing that we have been instrumental in acquiring and securing it for ourselves, from knowing that it is indeed the *reward* of our own exertions, we still find an additional call for gratitude and thankfulness, in feeling that it is always by His gracious gift alone, that we are enabled to fulfil the conditions, and so to lay hold upon everlasting life.

The fact of everlasting life (under which terms are included the blessings and enjoyments of an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven) being the *reward* of our own exertions, being the recompense of our own good deeds done in Christ, and being at the same time the *free*, gracious, and bounteous *gift* of God through our Lord Jesus Christ, is indeed so very important an element in the Christian faith, that I have been anxious to set it before you in all its fulness; and in the endeavour to render it clearer to some of you who may not, perhaps,



have thoroughly understood my argument, when referred to Almighty God and to ourselves, who are so immeasurably separated from Him, I will attempt to illustrate it by an imaginary compact and covenant between men. Suppose, then, that some wealthy and powerful nobleman were to meet with a labourer out of employment, willing and anxious to work, but almost brought to a state of starvation because he had been unable to obtain any occupation, the wages of which would procure for him the necessaries and requisites of life,—that seeing a fellow-man in such poverty he were to have compassion upon him, and take him into his service, agreeing to pay him a just and due amount for his labour,—that he were to covenant with him that he should continue to serve him at the same rate for a definite period, and that if he neglected to perform his duty he should forfeit his wages, and be dismissed from his employment in the same state of poverty as he entered it, but that if he faithfully and diligently fulfilled his engagements he should receive in full and liberal measure all that was promised to him. This would be a just and equitable covenant; the labourer would be fully entitled to the pay which he should earn by his labour; there would, however, be a debt of gratitude due from him to the nobleman who had taken compassion upon him, and employed him when he stood in need, even although the

work which he should do, and the service which he should render, were not more than adequately recompensed by the payment which he received. Suppose, also, that this nobleman, after he had made his bargain, and the other was entered into his service, were further spontaneously to promise him, "Continue to work as zealously and faithfully as thou hast begun, and I will not only give to thee the wages for which thou hast agreed, and which are indeed the full value of thy services, but I will also give to thee a rich and great inheritance at the end of thy stipulated time, and in the mean while I will make thy labours more easy and agreeable to thee as thou proceedest; but if thou relax thy exertions, neglect thy work, or perform it badly, I will, as it was before agreed, dismiss thee from my service, and cast thee out to all thy former indigence and distress." Would not this latter promise, on the part of the nobleman, be a free and gracious *gift*? And would not the rich and great inheritance be also in the end a *reward* for the labourer's own faithful exertions? True, of themselves his labours merited no such reward; all that was due to them before was their value in wages; but when once the nobleman had promised to them such a reward, and covenanted to pay it, he was fully entitled to it, having accepted the promise, if he fulfilled the conditions. Thus it would be at once a free and gracious gift on the one side, and yet not

less a reward on the other, gained and obtained by the fulfilment of the conditions under which it was proposed.

The case of ourselves with regard to God is still stronger. We are His creatures and His servants by creation and possession. Ourselves and all that we have are His. He has a full right to our entire services. He has only to command, and by every claim which could be urged we are bound to obey. We are not free from His power and control, and we could of ourselves be parties to no bargain, no condition with Him, unless He graciously condescended to allow us, and invited us to do so. But, although we were His slaves, He would not keep us in slavish bondage. Christ has made us free, and has offered to us the conditions of His gracious covenant by which we may work out our own salvation, and obtain for ourselves everlasting life. Thanks be to God for this His unspeakable gift! Everlasting life is offered to us as God's free, bountiful *gift*; and by performing faithfully the conditions under which it is offered to us, we may obtain it for ourselves, as the recompense of our own exertions and good deeds, as our exceeding great *reward*.

I shall be truly thankful if I have succeeded in making this subject as intelligible to any of you as I feel it and see it myself. When rightly understood it supplies the most constraining motives to obedience, the greatest

incentives to diligent and incessant exertions in our Christian duties. Deeply felt gratitude and ardent love, what constraining motives are these! Is there any thing that has so great an influence upon our hearts and our affections? Who that understands and knows aught of the free and gracious gift of God in the Gospel covenant of redemption and salvation, how He not only gives us all things richly to enjoy in this world, and promises us ineffable, inconceivable, and eternal joys in the world to come, but also has given up His only-begotten Son to suffer and die for us, to be made a curse for us to redeem us from the curse, so that we may be enabled to reign with Him for evermore in His heavenly kingdom,—who that understands and knows this can help being constrained by love, and urged by gratitude, to endeavour to please Him by keeping His commandments? Who that understands his own true and solid interests well enough to know how far the spiritual things which are offered to him transcend the carnal things which he now possesses, and the heavenly inheritance and eternal joys which are promised to him surpass all earthly and temporal possessions that he now may hold,—who that has a sufficient insight into this can fail to find in the consideration of his own true and solid interests, the greatest incentive to labour earnestly to make his calling and election sure, and to obtain for

himself at the last that exceeding great reward, to which good deeds of faith, and charity, and holiness shall, under the just conditions of God's gracious covenant, give him a full and indisputable claim?



## SERMON II.

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WHIT-SUNDAY.

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JOHN xiv. 19.

“Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.”

THE greatest paradox to the carnal mind—the greatest consolation to the believer, is the strange and startling truth that our Lord’s departure was expedient, that His absence visibly is the Church’s great gain. Yet so it is. Let us see this.

At the best and highest, what after all was our Lord’s material presence? It was only local, only temporary. He dwelt among men, but, at any rate up to the time of His resurrection, only as man. It was the greatest of privileges to walk with Him, to converse with Him, to hear those sacred words, such as man never spake, to hang upon the steps of His feet, so beautiful upon the mountains, and so blessed in their holy haste to proclaim the tidings of sal-



vation. But let us remember that we look back upon these blessed things with the full illumination of the Spirit and of the Church. They who had these privileges could not understand them. We are under the strength of the Comforter—the light of the Fountain of Light. We cannot realize what the personal, local, material presence of our Lord was to His Apostles before they were enlightened. It is to us a greater thing than it could have been to them. This much is certain, and it is a great mystery, that His own did not understand Him. His Apostles, up to the very last, had a very faltering, dull, incomplete notion of His mission, person, and character. They never understood what the kingdom of God was to be. Christ after the flesh they knew. They had companied with Him; seen Him the Teacher, the Healer; they had known Him journeying, praying, fasting, watching, a hungred, athirst; they had known Him as one of a holy family; they had known His friends; they had attended Him in the social happiness of a marriage feast; they had seen Him in the sacred ministry of the house of mourning, and at the grave of Lazarus had witnessed His human sympathies. This was much even to learn; with our light, oh, how much! and we may well look back with a kind of sacred envy at those who had these blessed opportunities, and, in a sense, not improperly.

But still greater things were reserved than

these; all this was, at the best, but a carnal vision—but a local presence—but a material gift of Himself. It was to be succeeded by a fuller, larger, freer, more spiritual dispensation. What had hitherto been local, was now to be expanded into universal; what had been material became spiritual; what was of a single race was to become catholic. The gift of the incarnation was to be followed by the indwelling of the Spirit and the Comforter in the imperial kingdom of God.

Still do not let us suppose that the dispensation of the Spirit superseded that of the incarnation, or that in the way of abrogation, the mystery which we adore on Whit-Sunday exceeds, by setting aside, the heavenly truth of Christmas. Far from it. The reign of the Comforter, the kingdom of heaven, the spiritual life of Christ in His Church, is all that the personal presence of the incarnate Jesus was upon earth, although it is much more. There is not a single grace, virtue, labour, deed of mercy, truth, which our Lord displayed visibly during His ministry and sojourn upon earth, which is not taken up, and absorbed, and repeated, and displayed over again, and is reproduced, and lives for ever in His Church, the community of faithful believers, the dispensation of His spiritual and everlasting presence. His character is shed abroad in "his body, which is the Church." The incarnation is, in fact, perpetual; it was

not a single historical fact, which begun and which terminated in time, which had an existence of thirty years, in the life and death of Christ after the flesh, and then entirely ceased. But it is the beginning, the first fruits of the new creation. The incarnation introduced a new and everlasting relation between God and man. It brought down a heavenly presence upon earth—it poured a new nature and faculty into the spiritual being of all who received grace henceforth to become the sons of God. The reality—and therefore, not in a local and material sense—the spiritual reality of the incarnation, is extended throughout the living Church. It is the presence of the Word, once incarnate in man, which sustains the new creation of grace, which makes us to be members of Christ, and children of God: because He is “the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

As, then, during the days of His flesh He ministered to all the wants of humanity, came to be all things to all men, so in the fulfilment of His mystical body, His invisible presence does not supersede, but fills up all those gifts, all those graces, all those ministrations, which He discharged during His carnal and local ministry. The presence of Christ in the flesh is prolonged and continued by His spiritual indwelling in the body of the believers. Whit-Sunday is the

commemoration of the descent of the Holy Ghost—the true birthday of the Church—the inauguration of the kingdom of God.

Now, then, we see how it “was expedient that he should go away;” now we understand the inferiority of that little time when they saw Him with the bodily eye as contrasted with the stupendous, and perfect, and immortal presence, which was to have no end—which was to be confined neither to race, nor kindred, nor people; when Abraham’s seed was to be increased as the stars in heaven; when from the east and west, and north and south, they were to come and sit down at the great Pentecostal festival; when all nations and languages were to hear Him and to worship Him, every man in their own tongue; when, as on this day, the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh; when humanity, in all its races, was absorbed into heaven; when that great sheet descended alive with all creatures, henceforth cleansed by God Himself.

Nor was this gift of Himself by the Spirit general only. The presence vouchsafed and pledged, and as on this day commenced, was not to be a vague, distant, inactive presence, merely swaying invisibly the whole body, but was to be a personal and conscious gift. The Holy Ghost descended upon each of the Apostles. Tongues of fire were seen upon every brow. The gift was separately vouchsafed. It was of divers



administrations, though one Spirit. Hence it is that we pray, in this our Pentecostal collect, "to be guided into all truth," that is, not only that the whole body and Church of Christ shall never be led into error, for that we know to be impossible; but that in each of us the Day-star may shine, and that from the eyes of each of us may be purged away the cloud of error. In the case of the Apostles, imperfect knowledge remained even up to the time of the ascension, the resurrection mystery itself could not free them from all their carnal thoughts of earthly dominion and temporal aggrandizement. Their hearts all along were of the earth, earthy. They did not realize the dignity of the Christ man. St. Thomas expressed but their general, and that a carnal, sense, when he required the evidence of the senses. But "blessed are they which have *not* seen, and yet have believed." This is the higher blessedness which is reserved for us under the Comforter; this is what we Christians have, which even those who touched and handled Him had not.

It was gradually that our Lord accustomed His Church to this the superior blessedness of faith over sight, of the invisible gift over the carnal presence, of the Spirit over the senses. "Touch me not" is His adjuration to Mary Magdalene. He would, as it were, gradually detach and wean His own from any trust in the creature, and from confidence in aught but



the Spirit. And so He went through a transitional and provisional state, partly transfigured, transformed, and glorified, and spiritualized, and partly of the old humanity, so to say, to accustom them to this the coming mystery, and to the gift of His incarnation surviving enveloped in the glories of the Godhead itself. The forty days was the preparation, the gradual accustoming the Church to its new relations; the preparation for His departure, the making ready the world for its greater and more abiding presence, that of "the Comforter, whom I will send unto you, and he shall abide with you for ever<sup>1</sup>."

And this gift is given not only to the general communion, but to each member of it; "the light that lighteth every man," the consoler of each of us, the strengthener of you and of me when, and as, we call upon Him; "the Holy Ghost, which sanctifieth me and all the elect people of God." This is our great Gospel privilege, to have Him dwelling in us, to have ourselves dwelling in Him. When our Lord was only in a single land, spoke but in a single person, how confined and narrow was the range of our perception; but now we see Him as He is, face to face, no longer through a glass darkly, but as the body of heaven in its clearness. He was to His own company, to His mother, to the seventy, to His Maries, to his John, to his Lazarus, a great and

<sup>1</sup> On this subject, see Dr. Moberly's "Discourses on the Great Fasting Days."

exceeding treasure, but now is He displayed in a great spiritual ministry pervading all lands, addressing all men; the great object of universal faith to His Church, a Teacher infallible, a Helper invincible, a King immortal, a Guide, though invisible, yet ever present, instructing alike babes and sucklings, kings and sages, the pride and the intellect, the poverty and the letters of all the world.

Therefore, brethren, to us in particular His departure, and the consequent descent of the Holy Ghost, bestowed upon man the new nature of the regeneration. Now, at last, was the curse done away, now was the penalty forgiven, now was the forfeiture and attainder reversed; now, because Christ Jesus had condescended to share in our human nature, so He blessed, and sanctified, and elevated all human kind for ever. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

The day of Pentecost, then, is the inauguration of the new kingdom of grace; it gives us a higher, deeper life, it ranges us under a new law, it invests us with fresh capacities, dignities, powers; in a word, with a new and better nature. Compare the saints, and martyrs, and Apostles, and Evangelists of the Gospel, with

the holy men of old ; we are no longer startled with inconsistencies, we are no longer perplexed with the man after God's heart, and yet an adulterer and murderer. Contrast St. Stephen with Abraham, nay, even St. Paul with Moses ; a glance will show us the gain which the Gospel is upon the law. Compare the Church's martyrs with the warrior judges and kings of the old dispensation. The Apostles before the day of Pentecost were, as has been said, much what prophets of old were, right or wrong, chosen vessels, yet of an inconsistent moral character : but now the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John the Baptist, and John the Baptist was himself the greatest—or greater was none—among those born of women. But we are born not only of women, but of God Himself.

The regeneration, the kingdom of heaven, the gift of the Spirit, is the last and crowning work of grace. All before it was preparatory ; this is complete ; the book is sealed ; the redemption is once for all offered. We have not the promise, but the performance of that better thing. We are redeemed from sin and death in the perfect manhood of the Saviour ; and with us, and in us, because in Him, the imperfect state of the old saints is completed and filled up. With them we become His mystical body, in which dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead : nay, we ourselves are

“partakers of the divine nature;” we have “grown into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” “We are come not unto Mount Zion, but unto the heavenly Jerusalem;” “we are raised up together, and made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

Now if all these be the blessings conveyed to us by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and if the Holy Ghost could not descend until He had ascended to His Father and to our Father, thence to send Him down to the new kingdom of His chosen, it is plain that this our dispensation transcends the dispensation of His personal ministry. For now is the great circle of blessings complete, which hitherto had been incomplete. All was then waiting for that fuller manifestation. Had it been possible for Him to have remained upon earth He would have been localized, His teaching materialized, His gifts partial. But now His voice is gone out into all lands; the good seed bears fruit an hundredfold; the bread of life, self-multiplied, goes forth to feed the thousands upon thousands; the cruse of His oil, the unction of the Spirit, knows no waste, no stint, nor decrease. And so the day of Pentecost is constantly repeated. Each day of the Christian Church is its renewed Whit-Sunday. The stream of fire descends on every spiritual man. Gifts constantly are vouchsafed, the fulness is ever present; the grace once given is inexhaustible. If He departed once



in the flesh, He returned in the Spirit never to depart. His Church repeats and continues His life, His teaching in the Word, His miracles in the conversion of sinners, His gifts in the sacraments, His presence in His invisible yet most true kingship. In His human nature we behold that perfection of which He has made our renewed nature capable, but in His Godhead through the Spirit we behold that likeness to which, in Him and through Him, it is His will that we should be conformed.

And if all this is the true account of the great mystery of Whit-Sunday, how does it address us as a practical subject? It is in this as in other things. I believe that the most constraining motive to a man's discharge of all social and relative duties is to remind him of his true corporate dignity. The sense of privilege and of our lofty calling and inheritance thus inspiring gratitude for grace given is the most animating and encouraging thought towards pastoral duties. What so constraining a motive to political duties as that of patriotism? Sons of Sparta, it is ours to adorn it. Citizens of a mighty state, subjects of a noble kingdom, it is ours to ennoble or to retain the true nobility of our great inheritance. Unless I am mistaken in the object of these special services, it is to awaken men to a higher, purer, more spiritual life. Experience tells us that it is at least a strong motive to ordinary obedience to law, to



enlarge not only or not so much upon the terrors and threats of offended justice, right though such motives are in their place, as also, or even by preference, on the blessedness of adorning our country and our ministry. And this too is Apostolic preaching. Addressing the Ephesians on "the mystery which now is revealed, that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known the manifold wisdom of God," St. Paul goes on, "I therefore," because you are this, because you are sharers in this inheritance, because you have obtained these privileges, because we are members of His body, of His flesh, of His bones, "beseech you to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Hence it is that immediately after recounting all the dignities of the Christian man, the Epistles immediately announce all our common household duties: the government of the tongue, the restraint of foolish talking, the duty of husband to wife, and child to parent, master and servant, rulers and subjects, the practical duties of diligence in our calling, honesty in our worldly business, resolution, simplicity in word and deed, sobriety, carefulness in speech and gesture; these are the simple lessons, the teaching in common things, which in the Epistles always follow the most exalted and highly wrought pictures of the dignity and majesty of the Christian man. The consciousness of the indwelling Spirit, the personal conviction that we are in very truth and

in no unsubstantial figure "called to be saints," will make us rise to the responsibilities of our high calling. If it is said, as it is of every Christian man, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ," surely this conviction will cleanse our thoughts, will inspire us with a godly confidence, will create in us a sober watchfulness, will suffuse our nature, body alike and spirit, with a desire to be conformed to His abiding purity. It is ours to "grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed to the day of redemption;" it is ours to remember that "if any man destroy or defile the temple of God, which is our body, him will God destroy." Clothed in the garments of God, it is ours not to stain them with the lusts of the flesh. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is *in* you?" And as the motive is thus personal and individual, so is it most universal. Remember that on the descent of the Holy Ghost they were *all* filled with the gifts of the Spirit. The fire of heaven descended on all heads, not on those of the Apostles only; a thought most suitable to us on this present occasion. For what these services are best calculated to produce is, as I have tried to show, a sense of our common brotherhood, and of our common ministry. It may be true that the tendency of our Church's ministrations has been, perhaps, to confine their influence too much on what are called the respect-

able classes ; but I have observed with pain a tendency in organizing some of these special services to address them exclusively to the working classes, as though in the great kingdom of God the artisan and the labourer alone required to be reminded of his forgetfulness of Christian duties, and to be awakened and converted to a living sense of his Christian gifts and privileges. Sure I am that a mission to the rich and to the educated, to the wealth and letters, to the comforts and respectabilities of this great city, is just as much needed as to the labourer and the outcast. You have all seen the invitation, "Come in your working clothes," to our special services and special sermons. I repeat the words, but in a different, yet a higher, wider sense. Come all of you, come all ranks in your working clothes, in your habits of decent varnished proprieties, which condescend to wear the outward form and shape of religion for two hours on Sunday morning, but which lay it aside in the counting-house, in the office, in the senate or the shop,—which throw it off for that easier robe of self-indulgence at home, in which we sit at the family table and at the domestic hearth, rather than in the wedding garment of the Gospel. Come in your working clothes, all classes of men. But what if those working clothes be of idleness, self-indulgence, selfishness, worldliness, pride, haughtiness of heart, uncharitableness, injustice, unmercifulness? If

these be our working clothes, come naked rather to the Cross of Christ. O Christian brethren, in the language of the day, we want a mission to St. James' as well as to St. Giles'.

"Sirs, ye are brethren;" we are all baptized into one Spirit, we are all sharers in one common nature, we are all anointed with the same indwelling Spirit. We have all one calling; the helps to heaven and the hindrances from heaven are the same. As in a political state rightly constituted, none is above and none is below his duties to his common country, so is it in the kingdom of God. From the sovereign on the throne to the beggar and outcast in his garret, we all have to do our duties in that station of life unto which it has pleased God to call us. That Gospel is but one-sided which addresses only social and accidental distinctions. God is no respecter of persons; and His message is not especially addressed to our miserable class-varieties and castes. There are neither Brahmins nor Pariahs in the kingdom of God.

I would then conclude by saying, equal privileges imply and compel equal duties; just as the gift on the first Whit-Sunday was to all nations, so now the Spirit is poured out upon all flesh. God, be assured, in the strength of the Comforter, with the work gives us all the capacity to do it. Such is the might, and majesty, and strength of grace. It is ours "to mount up with wings as eagles; we shall run



and not be weary, we shall walk and not faint.” “He has exalted the humble and weak ; he has filled the hungry with good things.” We are exalted to sit among princes ; we are taken for ever from the prison-house of Pharaoh. What the sin against the Holy Ghost may be in all its terror I will not pronounce ; but surely a sin against the Holy Ghost it is to deny His power and strength working in us to fulfil the righteousness of God. Because “he lives, and lives in us, we shall live also.” And what is life, but to abound in good works ? And what is our Christian life, the life of us miserable creatures, of you and of me, of the poor, the weak, the ignorant, the tempted, the blind, the stumbling, the doubtful, the obstinate, the sinner, but a life which is not our own, but rather the life of Christ working in us, strengthening our weakness, lightening our darkness, animating our faintness, consoling our despondency, lifting up our stumbling steps, invigorating our feeble knees, increasing in us the manifold gifts of grace ? If these manifold gifts are ours, to what heights may we not attain ; and who is there of whom we need be afraid ? The mountain is full of chariots and horses of fire ; not only good angels, but God the Holy Ghost is fighting for the very weakest Christian who calls on Him. If we believe in the gift and presence of the Comforter in all these things, “we are more than conquerors through him that loved



us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

## SERMON III.

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TRINITY SUNDAY.

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GALATIANS iv. 6.

“ And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.”

THIS is Trinity Sunday. All our Sundays till the beginning of winter are called the Sundays after Trinity. You will remember also that we finish every one of the psalms which we read daily with the words, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost*. You will remember that these words occur again and again in our service. They enter into the heart of our worship. One may say our common prayer is founded upon them.

But can it be *common* prayer if this is so? Is not this doctrine of the Trinity a very high doctrine? Is there not a deep mystery in it? What has it to do with common people? How can we ask those that toil and suffer to come to

our churches and join in our worship, if we thrust such thoughts as these upon them?

My brethren, I believe that if we took this Trinity Sunday out of the course of our year—if we blotted these ascriptions to the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit out of our services—we should destroy what is most common in them, what is most fit for ordinary men in them. I believe that *then* they would be no longer services for the needy and the humble, for the toiling and the suffering. They might contain a religion for fine and lazy people; they would not contain a gospel to wayfarers. They might furnish us with words in which we could speak out our thoughts and imaginations about God; they would tell us nothing of the way in which God draws nigh to us. We might fancy that they would be plainer to us than they are now; I think we should find that they no longer held out to us the least promise of a light which could make any thing plain to us. We might fancy that they no longer kept us at a distance by high and strange language; we should find, that they no longer told us how God in heaven and we on earth are brought nigh; that they no longer spoke of a love which is about us all, and is seeking to draw us all into one.

In the words I have just read to you St. Paul is discoursing of a Father, of a Son, and of a Spirit. If we understand the message which

he delivered to the Galatians, we shall be able to understand the message which Trinity Sunday is delivering to us.

He was, you know, the Apostle of the Gentiles; he gloried in the name. He had gone among the worshippers of idols in Galatia; they had listened to his words. A Christian Church had grown up among them; it consisted partly of Jews, chiefly, I suppose, of heathens. By and by teachers came to the members of this Church, and said, "You have been baptized with the name of Jesus Christ. That is well, but that is not enough. You do not belong to the stock of Abraham. The law of Moses was not given to your fathers. But the race of Abraham is the race which God has chosen, the race which He cares for, the one to which He has made Himself known. The law of Moses is the divine law. God is willing to be merciful to you and to make you His servants, no doubt; but it is on certain conditions that He will save you and be merciful to you. You must be signed with the sign of our covenant; you must come under our law. Jesus Christ has appeared in the world that you might be admitted to this great blessing; Paul is deceiving you if he has led you to think you can do without it."

This language had shaken the Galatians. They thought it must be true. They lost their confidence in him whom they at first had wel-

came almost as an angel from heaven. Therefore he wrote them this letter. He told them that none of those who talked of their Jewish privileges had been so strict a Jew as he had been, none had been so zealous for the traditions of their fathers, none had despised other nations so much. *But it pleased God*, he says, *to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles.* It pleased God to show me that though I was a Jew, I was a poor, miserable, helpless wretch in myself. It pleased Him to show me that He had not left me to myself; that there was One near me in whom I might be a righteous and true man. It pleased Him to show me that Jesus Christ, whom I had thought of as a blasphemer and a crucified man, was verily and indeed His Son and my Lord. It pleased Him to show me that the Son of God was not merely my Lord, but the Lord of every man, of the idolater as much as of the Jew. It pleased Him to show me this on purpose that I might go and preach of Him to those whom I had despised as outcasts and aliens from God; might tell them that that was true about them which I had found to be true about myself.

Here, then, was the difference between St. Paul and those who opposed him. They held Jesus Christ to be the great Teacher and Prophet whom all men ought to receive; he owned Him as the Son of God, who had come from



God to claim men as His sons. They thought that Jesus Christ had come to bring men into the covenant with Abraham; he believed that Jesus Christ had come to fulfil the covenant with Abraham by blessing all the families of the earth. They believed that He had come to bring the heathen under the law of Moses; he believed that Jesus Christ had fulfilled the law of Moses; that He did for man what the law could not do; that He made them partakers of God's righteousness, and gave them His Spirit to write God's law in their hearts and minds.

In other words, they were teaching these Galatians how, by believing certain things, and doing certain acts, they might recommend themselves to God; he was telling them what God had done, and was doing, to bind them to Himself, to deliver them from their sins, to make them like Him, to put an end to their strifes and divisions, to give them a place in His holy family.

All this is expressed in the words of my text, "Because ye are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

It says:—

(1.) *Because ye are sons.* St. Paul had taken a very beautiful way of explaining what he meant by this language. According to the Roman law, the son of a Roman citizen, though the heir of all his father's wealth, was up to a certain age counted as a servant. He had to go

through a process of emancipation before he was admitted to the rights of a child and a free-man. Such, said the Apostle, has been God's way of dealing with our race. He treated men as servants. He placed them under laws, and schoolmasters. All this was to prepare the world for the time of its emancipation. That time came when *he sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.* That act gives us our proper standing-ground. That act recognizes us as His children in the only-begotten Son. And, therefore, we are now no more servants, but sons. We have a right, through Christ, to say "Our Father;" for He in Christ has said to us, "My children."

(2.) That is the ground of what follows. Without it, what he has said would have been of little worth to the Galatians; they could not have understood him or believed him. *Because ye are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* Supposing God owned them as His children, and they never discovered that He was their Father, never wished that He should be their Father, what would they be the better? And yet assuredly this would be the case—they knew that it would—if they were left to themselves, left to form their own thoughts about Him. Instead of regarding Him as their Father, they would count Him a tyrant and an enemy;

instead of turning to Him they would turn from Him ; instead of asking Him to make them in His likeness, they would try to make Him in their likeness. But he says, God does not leave His work half performed. If He has sent His Son into the world to adopt you into His family, He has sent His Spirit to draw you towards Him, to fill you with discontent for the want of Him, to give you yearnings after Him, to teach you faith, and hope, and prayer ; to make you feel that there is no faith, or hope, or prayer, but that which is expressed in the words "Abba, Father."

Now I think you will see, my brethren, that if St. Paul was able to raise a protest against Jewish pride, and narrowness, and exclusiveness—if he was able to claim all nations and kindreds as equally dear to God—if he was able to vindicate freedom for men from the hard, cruel bondage which the Jewish doctors would have imposed upon them—if he was able to set forth God Himself as the author of freedom and redemption, not of destruction to His creatures—this was because he testified of a Father, a Son, and Spirit each acting for men ; because he testified of that Father, Son, and Spirit as the one God, whom men in all lands had been seeking for, though they could not find Him till He revealed His own Name to them.

And now I say that this same message is that which has been borne to Christendom and to

mankind, generation after generation, by Trinity Sunday ; that this is the message which it bears to us who are met in this church to-night. I think that if you and I lose any part of this message we lose something that gives us freedom, something that unites us to our brethren in all parts of the world ; that we acquire lower, darker, more superstitious notions of God ; that we feel less the glory and blessedness of being men.

(1.) For, first, Trinity Sunday teaches us to ground all our thoughts of God upon this name of FATHER. If we put any other name, however venerable, and beautiful, and glorious, in place of that, we shall be sure to go wrong, and to lose ourselves in some dark and dreadful imagination, such as the heathens had about their gods. It is good and blessed to remember that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth. But if you dwell upon that name, and do not put this name of Father before it, you will think that He has more to do with the sun and the stars, with the trees and the rivers, than He has with you. You will begin to dream of Him as a great Power. You will not worship Him as the God of righteousness and truth. You will not connect Him with your own acts, and words, and thoughts ; you will not connect Him with your fathers who lie in their graves, with your wives and your children who are by your firesides. You will soon not



care to think of Him at all; you will think only about the things He has made. And if, in some hour of sorrow and sickness, the recollection of Him comes back to you, and you try to pour out a prayer, you will fancy, as people did in the old world, as they do now in a number of lands, that He is like some of the things you see; ay, like the darkest and most terrible of them. You will associate Him with the fire and the whirlwind. He will not seem to you any longer a Creator, but a Destroyer.

Again, it is good to speak and think of God as a Lawgiver, a Lawgiver not of the earth and sea only, but of men; as one who gives us commandments which it is a blessing to obey and a curse to break. But if you sink this name of Father in that name of Lawgiver, you will never find why He gave those commandments; why He took such pains that men should know what it was right for them to do, and what inclinations they had to do wrong. You will suspect Him of giving laws to please Himself, or to have an excuse for taking vengeance on those who transgress them. You will change Him from a just God and a Saviour into a tyrant. You will forget, as those Jews did who turned the Galatians away from St. Paul, that the promise which God made to bless all the families of the earth was given long before the law on Sinai was given. You



will fancy, as those Jews did, that the law can impart life when it only speaks of death; that it can make us righteous when it only shows us our sin. You will come to be, as the Jews were, proud of having a law, though they never kept it. And therefore I say, if you would have healthful and right thoughts of God as a Creator, if you would honour God as a Lawgiver, be sure that you lay fast hold on that name FATHER. That will explain both the other names. That will tell you why God looked upon the world He had made with delight, and, "lo, it was very good." That will tell you why He will not let men go on in their folly and ignorance, and will guide them into the right way, and punish them when they go out of it. That will grow to your hearts when you are honouring your fathers and mothers, when you are trying to be just and true to your own children. All the learning in the world will not make the signification of this word plainer to you; but it will become plainer to you in your household tasks, as you spend your days in working for those whom you have begotten or brought forth, as you recollect those who took you upon their knees, and spoke kind words to you in your infancy. And every heartless, cruel deed you have done, and every hard word you have spoken, and every malicious thought you have indulged, will make you shrink from that name

of Father, and yet will force you to say, "Father, it has separated me from Thee: help me to arise and go to Thee."

(2.) I have said, Cling to this name of Father, and I repeat the words. For what I mean is, Determine that this name shall be a real name to you. And then I am certain that the second name which Trinity Sunday proclaims will become every day more precious and wonderful to you. There may be ten thousand thoughts and questionings in your minds about it: God forbid that there should not be! He would have us awake, and not asleep. The faith that will be found to honour and glory at last is a faith that has been proved in the fire. There may be ten thousand thoughts and questions in you about the relation of the Father and the Son, but in practice you always come back to this, 'I feel that if there is not a Son, if He has not taken my nature and died my death, I should never know any thing about a Father; if I forget the Son the other name passes away into vapour; in that hour when I want it most I shall be able to grasp it least.'

And oh, brethren, how sad a thing it would be, if each one of us, on a dying bed, when the wickedness of his heels is compassing him about, had to prove his title to call God a Father because he had done something or believed something more than others, instead of saying, "Christ, the only-begotten Son, has come to us

all, has died the death of us all, has risen and ascended for us all. God can look upon us in Him, can love us in Him. And in His name we can look up to God, we can dare to say, 'Seeing we are members of Christ Jesus, Thou with whom He dwells for ever, Thou who hast reconciled us to Thyself in Him, Thou art and wilt be our Father.' " Therefore I say, brother, hold fast by the name of SON. For the glory of God's nature, for the glory of His truth and love, for the glory of thy own race and of every child of man, let it not go. He who was deemed a blasphemer on this earth because He called Himself the Son of God, called Himself also the Son of man. He asserted His right to that name by living in poverty, by consorting with publicans and fishermen, by dying the death of the cross. He knit together the names, so that earth and hell should not put them asunder. Let us ask that by every act and word of ours we may bear witness of their union.

(3.) And we shall obtain even this blessing if we do not forget that third name of which Trinity Sunday speaks, if we remember that in our baptism the HOLY GHOST was not separated from the Father and the Son. To separate them is to destroy the unity of the Godhead, to introduce that broken, divided worship to which we are all so naturally prone. To believe that the Spirit of power and love and a

sound mind is with us, is not to indulge a vain and high conceit of ourselves, or a fanatical dream that we have communications from the unseen world which are denied to other men. This faith comes to us when we feel most our ignorance, our helplessness, our insincerity, when evils and follies are revealed to us in ourselves which we cannot charge upon any of our fellows, when we are most ashamed of our self-conceit and high imaginations, when we mourn most that our pride and selfishness have made us strangers to our brethren, when we long most to feel that we are members of a family, partakers of its sorrows and its joys. Then the promise of a Spirit, the assurance that He is indeed ours, because Christ, our Lord and Brother, has ascended on high to receive gifts for men, becomes real and substantial, when other promises and assurances look very unreal and unsubstantial. An ever present Reprover and Strengtheners, with us when we rise up and when we lie down, acquainted with the thoughts and intents of our hearts, caring for our brethren as much as for us, able to overcome our suspicions of them, our enmity to them, able to make us feel with them and for them, able to bring us and them to our common Father—dear brethren, such an one does not reveal Himself to us so much when we are poring over books,—though we need Him then to make us simple and childlike, alive and earnest;



but He does not reveal Himself then so often, as to those who are plodding the dreary highway of life, who know not how to act or what to think, as to those who are struggling with sore temptations, as to those who are overcome with the recollection of evils they have done, and who feel as if evil was pressing round them and closing them in, and there was no escape as out of the dark prison-house, to those who know not how to pray or what to pray for. To these it is that we preach of a Spirit, not caring to bring arguments for what we say, because the arguments lie in their own wants and misery, in the deep conviction that the misery must go on and become deeper, unless there is some friend wiser and more righteous than all human friends to bring them out of it. We turn to this counsellor and that ; we try to tell them something of what we have done, something of what is passing in us, something of what we are. They understand us a little, but very imperfectly. They soothe us, perhaps, when we do not need soothing ; they fret the sores which might be healed. They tell us of indulgence when we require deliverance. They help us most when they tell us of a Spirit who knows all which they do not know, who can give the power which they cannot give ; who never tolerates us in any evil ; who shows us that to be shut up in evil is to be in hell, but who will bring us out of that hell ;



who never leads us to hope that we can have peace here and hereafter with ourselves, while we are at war with our Father in heaven, but who helps us to arise and go to Him, who opens our lips to utter the child's cry.

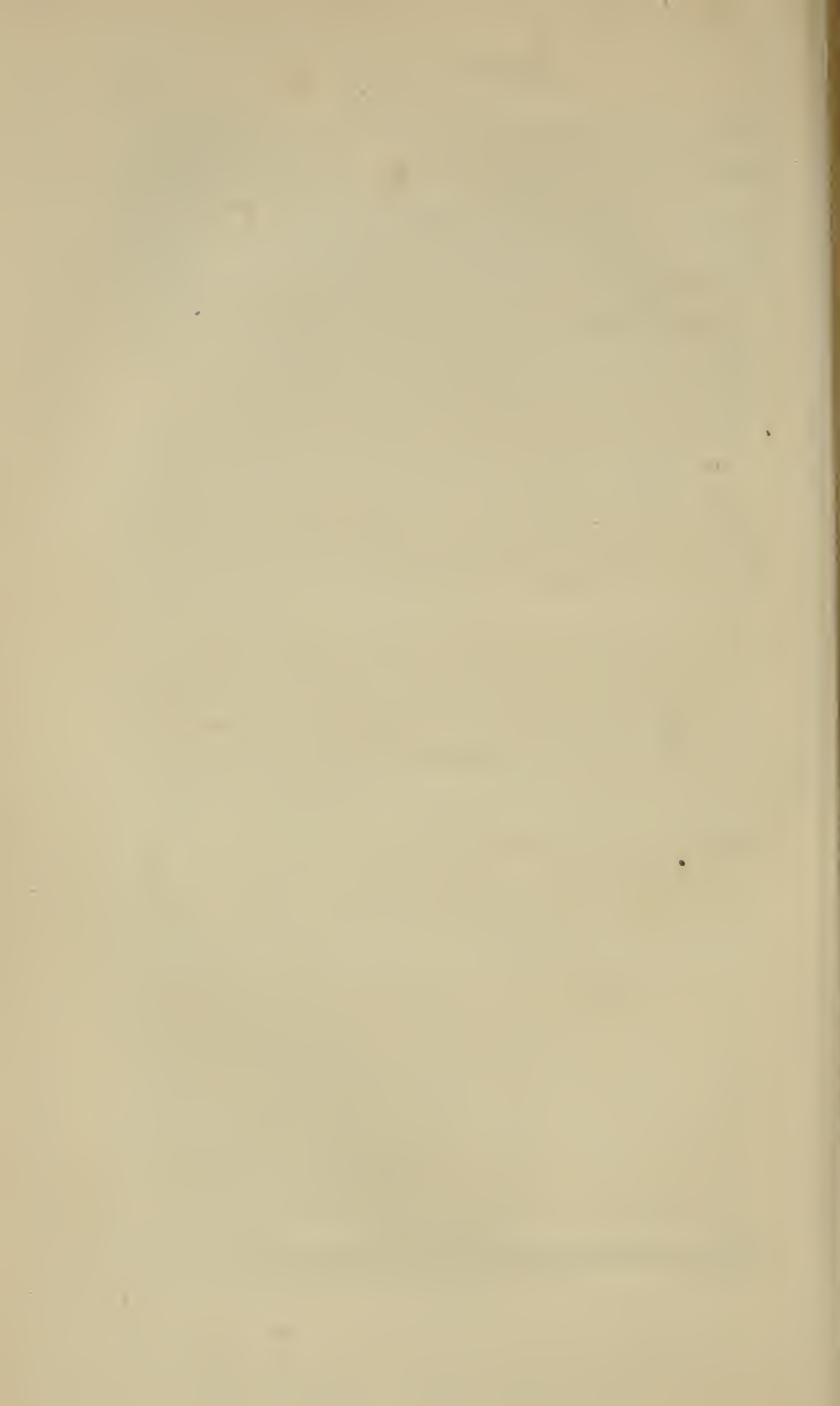
Of such a Spirit we may speak boldly to the prodigal and to the harlot. It is the message which they need to hear, because it shows them how they may come out of their sin, how they may claim the privileges of new creatures, how they may cast away lies, and enter into fellowship with the Eternal Truth. Of such a Spirit we may speak to those who are wasting their souls in frivolity, and mixing a little frivolous religion with their other vanities, in hopes of recommending themselves to God. The Holy Ghost will tear away the veil from their hearts. He will show them that God is claiming, not certain gifts and bribes, but their own selves; that they will have Him for their adversary so long as they are playing with their consciences and deceiving themselves; that He will work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure so soon as they yield themselves to Him to be made right within, to be purified and guided. Of such a Spirit we may speak to those who complain that the Church of God is not a witness for God to man; that it is torn with factions, that its members seem inclined to draw ever narrowing circles about themselves, not to declare the Gospel to

the universe. All this may be true; and if it is true, the doom of that nation which refused to fulfil its commission, by blessing all the families of the earth, will be ours. The message to us will be that which Stephen delivered to his countrymen, *Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.* But He whom we have resisted will prove that He abideth for ever. He will bring men out of every nation, and people, and tribe into that kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy, which is the kingdom of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the kingdom of which there shall be no end.

For, brethren, this mystery of which we have been hearing to-day is indeed one which we cannot comprehend, but which comprehends us; it goes with us where we go, it dwells with us where we dwell. The name with which we seal our children is the name of Him in whom we are living, and moving, and having our being. May you and I dwell more and more in that recollection! It will give us wonder, and hope, and calmness. We shall feel that we are continually in the presence of Eternal Truth and Love; we shall be sure that we are going out of that Presence, as Cain did, every time that we make a lie, every time that we sin against a brother; we shall confess how we have wandered from it, and lived apart from it; we shall know that to be banished from it is

to be in that outer darkness where is weeping and gnashing of teeth ; we shall ask the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit to lead us and all men out of the darkness, to enable us to come to the light, and walk in it, even while it scares us and dazzles us ; to give us eyes which may receive it, and rejoice in it for ever.

THE END.



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